

## Southeast Region

# Hurricane Katrina Report

September 3-5, 2005



### September 3, 2005, 7:30 am EDT

The Type 3 Incident Management Team completed the relocation of its base camp on Friday to Lacombe, Louisiana, at the Big Branch NWR, which also serves as headquarters for the Southeast Louisiana NWR Complex. The team continued to set up the logistical support needed to provide additional resources and expand the Service's mission to provide emergency services to our displaced employees. Cleanup and repairs continued to restore the facility to assure safe occupation by Service employees, local law enforcement, other emergency services, and hurricane relief workers.

A security team is in place to assist with immediate life and human welfare threats as needed. The team will also provide escort and work site security for FWS teams and provide security for the FWS incident command post at Lacombe, Louisiana, and the staging area at Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR in Gautier, Mississippi.

Additional resources, including heavy equipment and chainsaw crews, arrived at Lacombe Saturday to expand the Service's community assistance activities. Crews will continue clearing all remaining roads to the refuge office complex and adjoining residences, as well as remove hazard trees from around facilities and travel trailer area. The Service also established a relief support facility at the Lacombe site with catering and shower facilities for use by displaced Service employees, local law enforcement, other emergency services personnel, and hurricane relief workers.

Service personnel have assisted the local community in clearing roads to avail residents to emergency services.

### September 4, 2005, 8 am EDT

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Type 3 Incident Management Team is fully operational at Lacombe, Louisiana, headquarters for the Southeast Louisiana NWR Complex. It offers support (food, water, fuel, a safe place to spend the night) to local police, fire departments, and law enforcement engaged in the search and rescue efforts in New Orleans and throughout the impact area.

It had three task forces at work yesterday. One was clearing the interior of the compound, in preparation of completing the transfer from Mississippi, and two were clearing streets in Lacombe. All three crews will be working in the community today.

The team will complete its transfer of resources from Mississippi Sandhill Crane NWR to Lacombe today and expand its community service activities (clearing roads) in the local community, Gulf Coast, and the North Shore of Lake Pontchartrain.

### September 5, 2005, 7:30 am EDT

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Type 3 Incident Management Team located Lacombe, Louisiana, continues to

USFWS/Tom MacKenzie



*U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service crews work to clear the entrance to Big Branch Marsh NWR and the Southeast Louisiana Refuges Visitors Center.*

USFWS/Tom MacKenzie



*Service crews work to clear roads in the Lacombe, Louisiana area, meeting the agency's commitment to provide community assistance.*

USFWS/Tom MacKenzie



*A warehouse at Big Branch Marsh NWR suffers heavy damage from Hurricane Katrina.*

expand its community service activities (clearing roads) in the local community, Gulf Coast, and the North Shore of Lake Pontchartrain.

The Service had three task forces at work yesterday clearing trees and debris. One of the crews was opening up roadways and driveways to area homes. Five of the homes they opened up had families that had been trapped inside them for the past five days.

A Black Hawk helicopter mistook our Lacombe facility for a hospital and set down on our helipad. The Lacombe station was able to raise the Black Hawk via radio and discovered why they had landed. Our personnel were able to provide the Black Hawk crew with the specific coordinates for the hospital. Our ground crew also contacted the hospital to advise them that they had about one minute to prepare for an incoming heart attack patient.

Staff from St. Marks NWR, located near Tallahassee in Florida's panhandle, assembled a team Monday. They will arrive in Lacombe today. The team consists of seven heavy equipment operators, two full size dump trucks, two front end loaders, one 5-cubic-foot dump trailer, and six chain saw operators.

On Sunday, the Service received a request from the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries to aid in its search and rescue efforts in the St. Bernard Parish and 9th Ward. The Service's Southeast Region has dispatched six boats and its Southwest Region has dispatched one boat. Each boat is accompanied by one refuge law enforcement officer and a non-law enforcement employee. Each team is equipped with the ability to gain roof entry for rescue operations. This operation is being conducted from the Mandalay NWR in Houma, Louisiana. Shelter, showers, and cots are being provided at that location. Food is available at local restaurants. Meals are also being provided by individual staff members of Mandalay NWR.

In another mission, Service personnel from the Lafayette, Louisiana, area have coordinated and participated in two interagency rescue efforts in New Orleans. On Wednesday and Thursday (August 31 and September 1) an eight-member team with four boats rescued between 250 people and 300 people from the city's mid-town area. On Friday (September 2), the interagency team of Service personnel from Ecological Services, Office of Law Enforcement, Fisheries, and Refuges, along with members from U.S. Geological Survey, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, returned to New Orleans with 38 volunteers and 18 boats. Working with a search and rescue team from Phoenix, Arizona, they rescued over 100 sick and disabled individuals. The team plans to continue operations through Tuesday.

In addition to the search and rescue mission for stranded individuals, members of the Lafayette Field Office are working with a local animal shelter to care for pets belonging to individuals evacuated to the Cajun Dome in Lafayette.

In a fourth mission, six additional Service law enforcement officers have reported to the Lacombe site. They will begin working with the FEMA search and rescue efforts today.

### Additional information

Media contact coordination is being handled by the Regional Office of External Affairs 404/679 7287.



USFWS/Bud Oliveira

*A U.S. Navy Black Hawk helicopter lifts off headed for community hospital.*